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Covid-19 Marketing Survival Guide

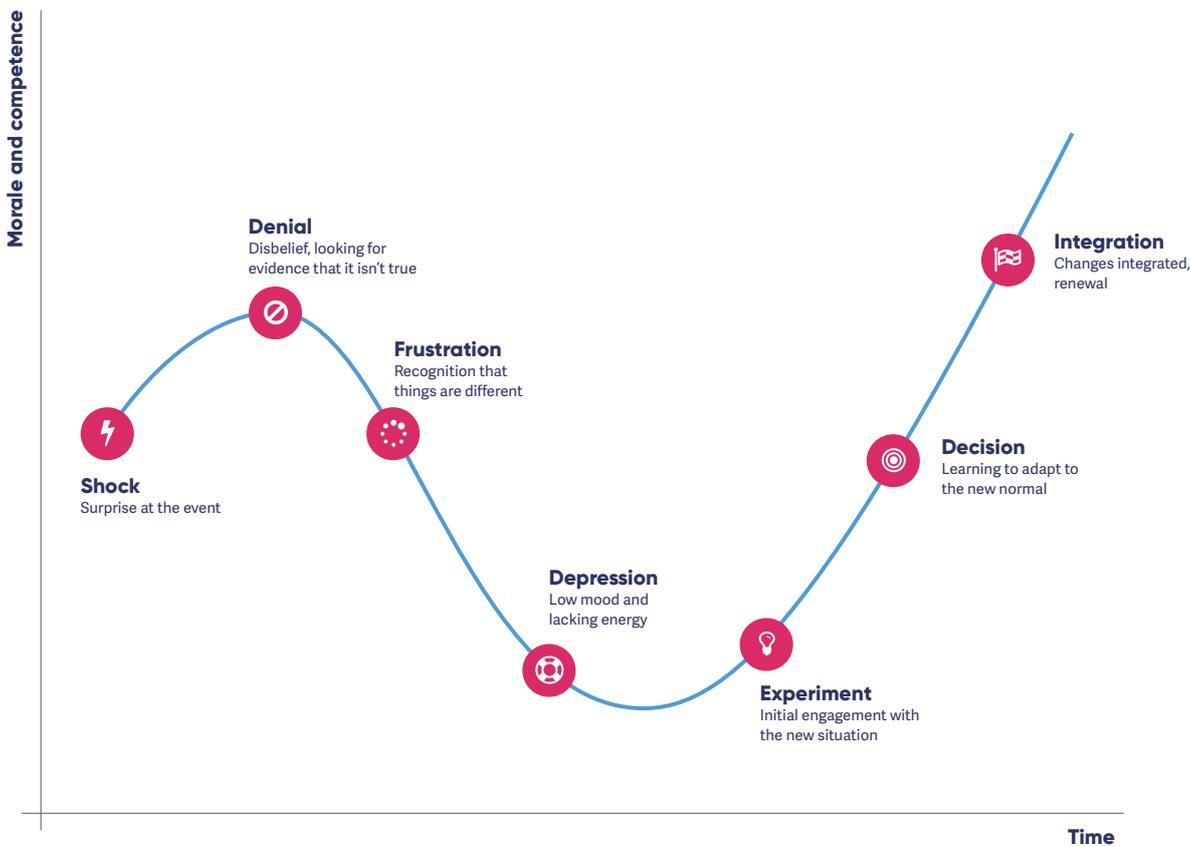
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Marketing Survival Guide for a World with Covid-19

We've been on lockdown in the UK since mid-March, with many companies (including ourselves) now just coming to terms with the scale of the likely impact on our economy and individual businesses. After the initial shock and period of adaptation, under normal circumstances we can expect new ideas and decisions to be made, ultimately leading to new ways of doing things which are then integrated into the new normal. What's more unusual about the Covid-19 crisis is the scale and scope of the lockdown is as yet unknown, but in addition, there are significant changes to the landscape happening on an almost daily basis. However, the sooner you can get over the shock, anger and the depression stages of the situation, the sooner you can start to begin planning for the future and defining what success will look like over the coming months.

The Kübler-Ross curve is a common model that pictorialises the type of situation many of us are now facing and how most people will react to it. By our own judgement, we'd suggest as of early April we're somewhere on a continuum between frustration and experimentation, where for many, the dust will have settled and they'll now be starting to look beyond the primary challenges of cost cutting and securing financial resources. The next stage is clearly to evolve, but what does this mean for your marketing?



Organisations use the research from Kübler-Ross's change curve to understand how people adjust to change.

Talk to your customers

How you communicate with customers will vary of course, and it will naturally depend on where you are on the Kübler-Ross curve, and where your clients and customers find themselves. Perhaps most importantly, now is not the time to crawl under a rock and hide. This doesn't necessarily mean investing in ad campaigns or a new website, but ensuring that you're communicating with customers and suppliers in a supportive and honest way. Explain the measures you're taking to protect staff and customers and be up front about the impact of how your products or services can be delivered.

Communication is key

Communication is critical in any crisis, but there can be a fine line to tread, especially with marketing messages which can easily appear ill-judged or insensitive. Given that we're all experiencing the same lockdown this can be both a blessing and a curse. A blessing because it makes the communication easier, but a curse because we're all having to react to a new reality which makes it easy to miss the mark with your content.

Adapt your Messaging

Your messaging needs to acknowledge the situation; not necessarily through explicit words, but certainly through empathy. This is a human crisis first and foremost, and it won't be long before most people know of someone who has at least been infected with Covid-19. This means that using humour in your marketing can be a risky strategy, but it's also fair to say that many people will enjoy the light relief of something entertaining.

If you use automation to schedule your posts on social media, given the fast changing nature of the current situation, be prepared to change or even stop posts from being published. It's difficult to plan too much more than a few days in advance around certain content types.

People have new problems that need to be solved

The good news for some businesses and marketers in this situation is that it means there are new audiences looking to solve new problems. Most of these will present opportunities to solve them here and now, so timing and tone is everything.

Review your existing campaigns

It's obviously vital that your messaging doesn't create reputational problems for you by failing to be empathetic with your audience or promoting something now seen as inappropriate. This might mean you need to review your keyword strategy to ensure you're not wasting budget on ads that are unlikely to convert, or worse still, causing permanent damage to your brand.

We're in it together

This is a time when we all need to pull together, and we can all support each other on social media platforms or through other marketing. This could be done simply by mentioning or tagging in other companies, right through to new partnerships and collaborations. When everyone is doing well in the good times, partnerships can be very hard to form, but at times like this, when there's literally a fight for survival, it can be much easier to form alliances and partnerships to support awareness, or the delivery of a new product or service.

Be Positive

Try to be upbeat in your messaging. When there is bad news all around us, particularly with always-on social media and 24 hours news channels providing minute by minute updates, it's very easy to become distracted and feel there's literally nothing positive in the world. The depression stage in the Kübler-Ross curve is easy to fall back in, so your messages should look to the future while taking into account the immediate difficulties people are facing.

As we've seen in many cases, the national shutdown has inspired many people to volunteer, support their communities or do something different to promote well-being, a positive spirit and will to beat the impacts of the Coronavirus. Taking into consideration the point above about your messaging, being upbeat can also include re-modelling and adapting your business, shaping it to become stronger and more relevant to an economic landscape that will be very different in the future.

Review your Channels

Look at where your marketing messages are promoted. With people at home and unable to go out as much, online content consumption is soaring across the likes of Zoom live streams, podcasts and of course social media. If you've never done a podcast, or would like to appear on a podcast, now could be the time to reach out to people to try and spread your message in a new way using different media.

Now can be a great time to build communities (we've recently created our own Facebook Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/clientsidedigitalcommunity/> which is free to join). These are great places to provide continual updates and advice without bombarding people with what they may consider unnecessary email communications that fail to hit the spot. Groups on Facebook can also be far more conversational, involving wider numbers of contributors and keeping the conversation going for longer periods of time.

What else do you know?

Consider how else you can help your customers. If your business works remotely for example, how can you share your experience of this? This could be on a practical level where you share the tools and software you might use, right down to the way you manage your communication and how frequently you meet with your colleagues.

Stay Social

We're all missing social contact, and while social media at least provides a way to keep in touch with each other, there are some innovative approaches companies are taking to continue with their events program, albeit in an online format. Whether this is casual drinks meetups, or more formalised webinars, or even interactive meetings, these can be a good way to build community and keep conversations going through this difficult time.

Summary

Now is the time to manage the challenges and embrace opportunity. New opportunities will be all around us over the coming months, however it can take a mindset shift to re-see the way we work, and then to re-package the products and services we've been so used to delivering in 'normal' times.

We may call ourselves experts in digital marketing, but the reality is that we're all learning through the situation we're now in. If you think we can help you with some of the points above, then please do reach out to us. There's no charge, no obligation, but out of conversations new ideas and approaches can reveal themselves - for both sides and together, we can explore ways to adapt to the new world in front of us.

About A Digital

For over 10 years, A Digital has been working with companies across a range of sectors to solve the problems they face creating, maintaining and promoting their digital content, and making their systems work more efficiently.

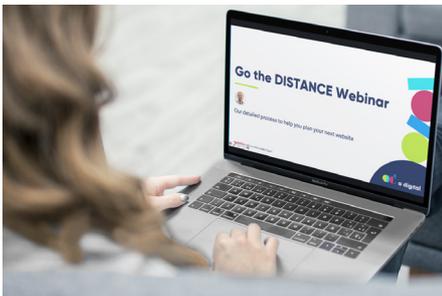
Founded by Andrew Armitage, A Digital has grown into a multi-award winning agency with a reputation for delivering exceptional visitor experiences through design and technical development, matched with guidance to maximise your digital strategy. Andrew has spoken at international conferences, has written for Net magazine and is currently writing his first book about the website planning process, due to be published in late 2020.

Once I made the switch to A Digital, it was like a breath of fresh air. They are obviously skilled in making beautiful and functional websites, but it was their client management and problem-solving skills that really impressed me. I'm 100% happy with my A Digital experience.

Jeremy Tankard Typography

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